



# The 100th Running of the Indianapolis 500 and 3.4 Steps in Texas

Pictures and captions, Cindy Estes; Words, Eddie Estes

A. J. Foyt IV, driving his grandfather's 1964 Watson roadster, A.J. won the Indy 500 and nines other Indy car races in 1964. This was the last roadster to win at Indy.

(Pictures top to bottom) The Hinkle Special sponsored by Wichita oilman Jack Hinkle and driven by Jack McGrath; 1935 Shaw Indy car, another Indy treasure; 1908 Mercedes Benz, actually built before the first 500 mile race at Indianapolis held in 1911; Cindy's favorite, "Makes me want to load it up and go somewhere!!"; four time 500 winner, Al Unser Sr. driving the 1911 winner car in Vintage Race Car parade prior to the start of the 500.

**W**e talked about the 'bucket list' and how the Indy 500 was one of the top sporting events in most everyone's list in our last story. This year, based on the 375,000 estimated in attendance at the 500, one in every 1,000 people in the United States was at the 500. Never in the history of the race were all of the reserved seats sold out and the first time that all general admission tickets sold out. Scalpers were quite busy on the street corners as they had been in years past. Some people simply did not get tickets at all after waiting too long. It was like nothing we had ever seen before. After the remodeling of the front straightaway area, which created additional seats and new entry area for the fans, the track was ready to present one of the most exciting weekends ever.

"CARB Day" was held on Friday before the 500 and it had the largest crowd that had been seen there in many years. The fans were treated to many laps of vintage Indy cars showing their stuff. Many of the fans had never seen these cars, let alone heard them as they motored around the two and a half mile oval. They were also on display near the Speedway museum. It is like a walk back in time and the fans really enjoyed just being able to be that close to these treasures.

In addition to the vintage race cars, Carb Day featured a one-hour practice for the qualified cars for the 500. It is their last time on the track before the event. The only incident occurred when Pippa Mann spun on the track. This is an opportunity for the drivers and crews to practice pit stops and race conditions on the track. For many of the fans, it is their first chance to see the cars that will be competing in the 500.

The Freedom 100, featuring the Indy Lights cars and drivers, also is a major event on Carb Day. This race has produced some of the best races at the track. This year was no exception as the closest race in the history of the Speedway was won by Dean Stoneman over Ed Jones in 0.0024 of a second. It was closer than a photo finish and took some time to make certain who the winner was. What a race!

The final event of the day has become an Indy tradition as the TAG HEUER Pit Stop competition gives the crews the opportunity to perform against each other. The crowd witnesses some of the very best crew work seen anywhere in motorsport events. It is an elimination competition with the winner taking all the prize money. The Penske team of Helio Castroneves was the winner this year.

Legends Day is on Saturday with the fans getting to see up close many of the current and past drivers. It is also the public drivers meeting where fans actually are invited to witness some of the info shared with the 33 starters of the race. After the drivers meeting, the drivers are then loaded in buses and transported to the parade area for their appearance in one of the largest parades in the nation. Each year the parade produces some of the best floats and biggest crowds, where reserved seats are sold for the thousands who attend. It is a very special addition to the 500 Festival.

## The Race

The Indianapolis 500 this year was the 100th 500-mile Indy car race conducted on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's oval. The morning activities included a parade of past 500 winners and vintage race cars driven by several of the winners. It was a very special moment for the fans and families of the drivers. Another very important part of the morning activities was the special "Thank You for Your Service" for our military service members. Each division of military service was present, including several survivors of Pearl Harbor.

Ray Harroun won the inaugural race in 1911. James Hinchcliffe stopped a streak of pole winners from Team Penske in 2016 by winning the Verizon P1 award for the 500. Twenty drivers have won the race from the pole – most recently Castroneves in 2009. Pippa Mann was the only female driver in the field. This marked the 17th consecutive Indy 500 that a female had qualified for the race. Tony Kanaan started his 255th consecutive race, which extended his Indy car record streak that began in 2001 at Portland.

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The J W Marriott welcomes fans to the race and downtown Indy.



## Rookie Rossi Wins

Predicting the outcome of the Indy 500 is truly impossible. This year especially, who would have believed this: a rookie running out of fuel on the last lap, coasting to a stop and needing a splash of fuel to make it to Victory Lane. Alexander Rossi was that rookie and with the coaching of his co owner, Bryan Herta, was able to make the fuel numbers that would win the race. "I have no idea how we pulled that off," a stunned Rossi admitted in Victory Circle after drinking and then pouring the bottle of milk over his head, "I simply can't believe we've done this!" Rossi became the 10th rookie in Indianapolis 500 history to win the race and the first since Helio Castroneves in 2001. Rossi's final lap averaged 179.784, nearly 40 mph slower than the second place driver Carlos Munoz, but he was far enough ahead to coast across the yard of bricks by the largest margin of victory since 1996. Herta, whose team merged with Andretti's this year to form Andretti Herta Autosport with Curb-Agajanian and field Rossi, said in the media center: "Man, it was so close at the end, for a rookie to drive with the poise he did in such a tough situation. I was telling him, Don't let anybody pass you but save fuel - and he did it".

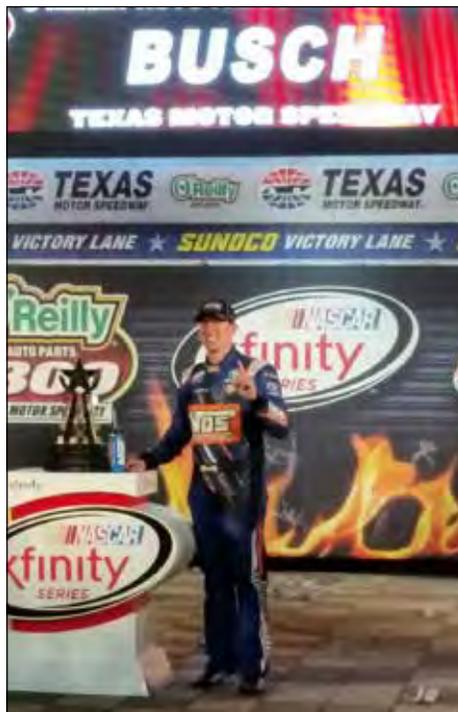
This was another thrilling 500 that saw 13 drivers swap the lead 54 times, actually the second most changes in the history of the 500 (68 in 2013) and the seventh most for any Indy car race. According to IndyCar, the majority of the field, including Rossi, stopped for fuel and tires on lap 164 during a caution period caused when Takuma Sato's No. 14 ABC Supply AJ Foyt Honda made contact with the turn 4 wall. Rossi was seventh on the lap 167 restart and bided his time as those ahead of him came to pit for a splash of fuel in the final 10 laps. Rossi was able to nurse his

car home with help of a tow from another Andretti teammate Ryan Hunter-Reay. Hunter-Reay led a race-high 52 laps but a pit lane incident with his teammate Townsend Bell put him out of contention.

The crowd was as stunned as Rossi and his crew and it was a popular victory, almost hard to believe. In February, Rossi wasn't even thinking about Indy and now he is the victor of the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500.

## 3.4 Steps in Texas

What kind of a title is 3.4 Steps in Texas? The Nascar Camping World Truck Series and the Indycar Series have combined to have a special weekend at TMS for several years. The trucks, always without failure, put on a great race. This year, prior to the race, Eddie Gossage, TMS CEO honored Cole Custer with a graduation from high school ceremony in Victory Lane. Cole, who



Kyle Busch wins his 80th Xfinity race at Texas Motor Speedway.

was racing in the Truck race was going to miss his high school graduation at home. Nice touch from the Speedway. The race was won by William Byron, age 18 in the No. 9 -

Liberty University Toyota owned by Kyle Busch. He has gone on to win two more truck races out of the 10 he has entered. Matt Crafton (second) posted his 20th top-10 finish in 31 races at TMS and Johnny Sauter (third) posted his 12th top-10 finish in 16 races at TMS. The race went down to a last lap shoot-out with rookie Rico Abreu smacking the wall in an attempt to get the lead. The fans loved it.

Now to the Indy race. To begin with, and looking back, Texas Motor Speedway, one of the nation's greatest tracks, had some bad luck with the 20th anniversary of the Firestone 600 Indycar Series race on June 11th, which resulted in the completion of the event being scheduled for August 27. Rain and weepers kept the event from being completed. The track crew and officials did everything they could to get the race completed, but the weatherman just wouldn't let it happen. The 600 at TMS is and has been one of the most exciting races on the Indycar Series calendar each year. Fans are treated to some of the most down-to-the-last-lap finishes on the circuit. As a matter of fact, sometimes at Texas Motor Speedway, a seat is not even needed because the fans are standing most laps, anyway!

Heavy rain showers fell throughout the afternoon at TMS and drying efforts delayed the start of the event. Racing legends A. J. Foyt and Johnny Rutherford were at the speedway, Foyt with his entries and Rutherford after having driven the pace car at the Indy 500. Foyt and Rutherford are the namesakes of the Foyt-Rutherford Trophy which will be presented to the winner

During the delay and track drying, several of the Indycar Series drivers headed for the grandstand to meet with the fans. It was a very special moment for the fans and a great move on the drivers' part. They were greeted with such re-



spect from the Texas fans and everyone seemed to have a great time. The sadness came when the race was delayed until the following day.

Race day dawned with a hope that the race would be completed, even though the forecast wasn't the greatest. After the race was underway, and it was terrific, one of the most terrifying accidents occurred. Conor Daly lost control of his car and slammed into Josef Newgarden. Newgarden's car ended up on its side and headed for the safety barriers head first. Newgarden's injury included a broken collar bone and hand injury. Even with these serious injuries, Josef went on to win the Iowa Corn 300 in July where he set a new record for laps led, 284 in an Indycar Series race. How's that for effort?

The Firestone 600 will be completed on August 27 without Daly or Newgarden since they were out before the race was called.

### The Duck Commander 500 Weekend

Kyle Busch won, on a streak, two wins in a row, after it appeared that Martin Truex Jr. would win. Dale Earnhardt Jr., Joey Logano, Jimmy Johnson and Chase Elliott, fifth, a career best, at this point of the season, followed Busch across the finish line. Truex didn't pit for fresh tires, just about everyone else did and after that he was at the mercy of his tires. In the press meeting afterward he felt they had done everything right but that one error.

Thirteen cars were involved in a major accident with 40 laps to go with Austin Dillon and Jimmy Johnson tangling up on the backstretch. Ryan Newman and Paul Menard, two more Richard Childress Racing cars were also involved, making it three of the Childress stable in one accident.

Speaking of Kyle, he also won the O'Reilly Auto Parts 300 during this weekend. It was his 80th Xfin-



Alexander Rossi, Indy 500 winner with Michael Andretti and Bryan Herta, meeting with the media after the race.

ity career win. Race fans will remember when no one thought that Mark Martin's record of 49 wins would ever be broken.

Texas Motor Speedway offers so much for the fans, and the ticket prices are sometimes a shock at

how reasonable they are.

Cindy and I are looking forward to seeing you all at the 3i Show in Dodge City, October 13, 14 and 15th. Take care! Never turn your back on a race car!



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